

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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Commission Photo by Shomon

AWAITING THE BLUE COMETS
T. D. Watkins, Commissioner,
waits expectantly for doves in a
Piedmont cornfield.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

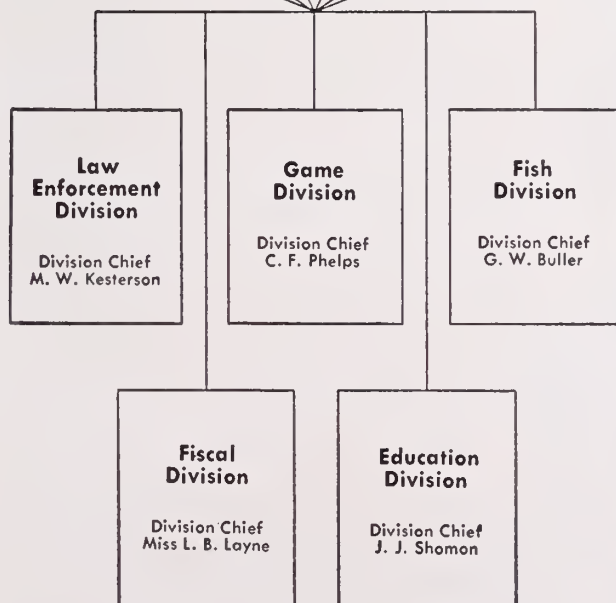


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In This Issue

	Page
What Can We Expect This Fall?	4
Look Before You Shoot!	5
Tally Ho! The Fox!	8
What About the Grouse?	10
Conservationgram	13
The Commission Takes V.S.O. on Bird Trip	14-15
In Organization There Is Strength	16
Our Disappearing Birds	18
Virginia Inland Fish Series	20
Virginia Game Bird Series	21
Field Force Notes	23
The Drumming Log	25
School Page	26

Cover Photo

The common skunk stands right up to the cameraman in this shot.

Photo by Charles W. Schwartz

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE gratefully receives for consideration all news items, articles, photographs, sketches and other materials which deal with the use, management and study of Virginia's interrelated, renewable natural resources:

WILDLIFE

SOILS — CONSERVE — WATER

FORESTS

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT THIS FALL?

At this time every year, just before the opening of the hunting season, we who love to hunt like to be told what to expect in the way of game abundance. The tough thing about this question is that we like to be told there will be a bird under every bush. If, however, each bush does not produce its quota—then those of us who made the forecast get the blame. Starting with this fact in mind, that we can make only an intelligent guess, let us look at the record, and you be the judge.

Throughout the state come reports to the effect that many small quail are being seen. This, in all probability, means that the early clutches of eggs have met with misfortune, causing the mother bird to re-nest later in the season. These young birds will be scarcely full grown when opening day arrives. However, prospects do look good in most of the state.

Where you find the quail shooting to be good you can also look for good rabbit hunting, because the habitat requirements for both are quite similar. There has been a noticeable decline in the fox population, and this alone should mean more quail and rabbits.

From all reports, the squirrel will provide some good hunting in most of the state. Many good reports are coming in from around the Dismal Swamp about a great number of squirrels being seen.

From all indications, the waterfowl season should be as good, if not just a little better than it was last year along the Atlantic coast.

An epizootic has hit our prize mourning dove in its wintering grounds. Thus, the bag limit has been reduced from 10 birds a day to 8. As yet it is not known whether or not this disease will have any extreme effect upon Virginia's dove shooting.

The outlook on rail shooting, both sora and clapper, is about the same as last year, which should mean that most hunters will come home with some game.

The state's turkeys have not fallen prey to any abnormal amount of disease this year, and if all goes well from here on, we can expect a fair harvest.

The deer population in many sections of Virginia is high. In others, they are holding their own or are on the increase, so to all of those seeking the whitetail, they are there if you can find them.

Wherever you hunt this fall there is one thing you will surely find, and that is, plenty of exercise, a friendly smile, and a lot of fun. Good luck, ninrods of Virginia, and safe hunting.

—I. T. QUINN, *Executive Director*

LOOK

Before You Shoot!

By J. W. COURTNEY, JR.

AT least 9 of the 19 hunting casualties of the Virginia 1950-51 hunting season would have been spared had each hunter taken that extra split second to follow the advice, "Look before you shoot!"

In war, the soldier looks before he shoots, to be sure that his target is a human being and an enemy. In hunting, the hunter should look before he shoots, to be sure that the object which moved in the shadow or distance was legal game, and *not* a human being, in the line of fire. Also, where a rifle or a shotgun with a slug or buckshot is being aimed, the hunter should take particular care to be



Commission photo by Kesteloo

sure that there is either an adequate backstop behind the game, or sufficient clear area for the missile to expend its energy without striking a person, a building, or the livestock of an accommodating and friendly farmer.

Take that fraction of a second to look, Mr. Hunter, before you shoot. If you don't, you may have the very unpleasant duty of informing a friend's widow or son of a tragedy for which you are responsible. True, you may lose an occasional shot by pausing, but need I tell you that it will be much better to lose that game than to kill a human being?



Commission photo by Kesteloo

In war, the soldier looks before he shoots, to be sure that his target is a human being and an enemy. In hunting, the hunter should look before he shoots, to be sure that the object which moved in the shadow or hedgerow is fair game, and *not* a human target.

Of the state of Virginia's 19 hunting casualties there were 5 cases in which rifles were involved, and 14 cases in which shotguns were involved. There were no self-inflicted cases with the rifle, but with the shotgun there were 7 self-inflicted and 7 inflicted by others. Gauges for the shotguns involved are not specified; however, for rifles there were 3 of .22 caliber, one of .44-40 caliber, and one unknown.

This breakdown of arms involved somewhat ruins the excuses for outlawing rifles for deer hunting in many of the counties.

There is another breakdown on the hunting casualties which warrants much consideration. It is the fact that of the 19 casualties, 7 involved juniors whose ages were 17 years or less. Two of these cases were self-inflicted, and 5 were inflicted by others, with 4 of the 5 involving rifles.

The downright stupidity and negligence with which our adults fail to prepare youngsters in the safe handling of firearms is amazing. In December, 1949, I personally appeared before a county board of supervisors and advised against additional anti-firearm legislation. I suggested that they enter into a program of instruction to youngsters on the correct and safe manner of handling firearms, as a means of reducing accidents in hunting and in the home, as well as giving them a background of knowledge of the rifle in case we become involved in another war. A blunt comment advised me that it would be useless to teach the youngsters in

that county how to shoot a rifle, because it was "illegal to hunt deer" there with a rifle!

Feeling as I do about young people and their inherent desire to hold, admire, and shoot a firearm, I would like to call your attention particularly to the responsibility of our state and communities, as well as adult individuals, of preparing these youngsters to handle firearms in a careful and correct manner.

During the past 25 years the National Rifle Association has been promoting a junior rifle instruction course through its affiliated clubs. During this period over two and one-half million youngsters have been instructed, without a single serious accident. At present there are 31 senior rifle clubs and 22 junior rifle clubs in Virginia affiliated with the NRA. In addition, there are several other junior clubs, not affiliated with the NRA, who are also instructing juniors. Throughout the nation there are 4,028 senior, and 3,065 junior clubs. This is fine as far as it goes, but as yet the program does not reach into every community, much less into every high school and college.

In 1949 the New York State Conservation Commission gave serious thought to a workable plan for instructing new applicants for hunting permits. The initial plan required that all hunters purchasing their first hunting permit after July 1, 1949, must appear before a game protector and demonstrate their ability to handle firearms safely. This was fine as far as it went; however, the game

protectors were swamped, and were unable to give time for instruction.

In February, 1950, a bill submitted to the legislature carried the specific provision that National Rifle Association instructors be authorized to train and qualify young hunters for licenses. As soon as the law became effective, nearly 300 instructors offered their services, and the rifle clubs offered their ranges, in cooperation with the program. There was also a drive to qualify more instructors, which brought the total to over 600. The instructors received "Instructor NRA Jr. Hunter" patches, and their pupils received "NRA Jr. Hunter" patches.

Many youngsters in the teen-age group had obtained their hunting permits before this program was inaugurated. Among this *untrained* group there were 17 accidents. Not a single accident was recorded among the *trained* group!

Your State Rifle & Revolver Association in Virginia is currently making plans to be ready in case our legislators consider similar legislation. Your state association, a non-profit group, is made up of NRA affiliated clubs in the state. Each club will be encouraged to develop its membership into rifle instructors, and also to develop its junior members into assistant rifle instructors with commissions issued from the NRA.

Each of the 53 clubs in the state will have to

turn out a great number of instructors to meet the needs of our state, but I believe it can be done. Among the juniors, promising youngsters who receive their assistant-instructor commissions when they are 16 years of age may become full-fledged instructors at the age of 21. Also, the game wardens who attended the 1951 game warden school will have received the instructor's course, and will be in a position to organize rifle instruction groups in their counties.

Let's learn and live the ten commandments of hunting safety:

Treat *every* gun with the respect due a *loaded* gun. This is the cardinal rule of safety. Carry only empty guns, taken down or with action open, into automobile, camp, and home. Always be sure that the barrel and action are clear of obstructions. Always carry your gun so that you can control the direction of the muzzle, even if you stumble. Be sure of your target before you shoot. Never point your gun at anything you do not want to shoot. Never leave your gun unattended unless you unload it first. Never climb a tree or a fence with a loaded gun. Never shoot at a flat hard surface, or the surface of water, because you cannot control a ricochet. Do not mix gunpowder and alcohol.

Look before you shoot. Look far ahead. Teach and promote safety with firearms to our youngsters of today, to reduce firearm accidents tomorrow.

The end of a tragic day. Scenes such as these can be prevented when we learn to treat *every* gun with the respect due a *loaded* gun. The photographer has re-enacted this scene to illustrate what can actually happen to a careless hunter who neglects the rules of safety.



Photo by Flournoy, VSCC

THE EVENING was cool and clear that October, and as we sat upon the ridge awaiting the return of the hounds we gazed out across the valley upon the beautiful autumnal splendor. This was a part of fox hunting that very seldom reached the printed page.

The dogs had been running that redtail for over three hours now, and if our timing had been correct the music of their bellowing voices should soon be heard down the valley from where we waited. As usual, we hadn't got even a glimpse of old bushy-tail the whole evening. We could never seem to figure out just where he was going to go. One night he would take off across country, down the valley and across the creek, circle around the swamp and then come back to where the chase had started. The next night we would wait at what we thought to be the perfect spot to get a look at that dog fox, but sure enough he would go in the other direction, directly away from the place where we would take our stand.

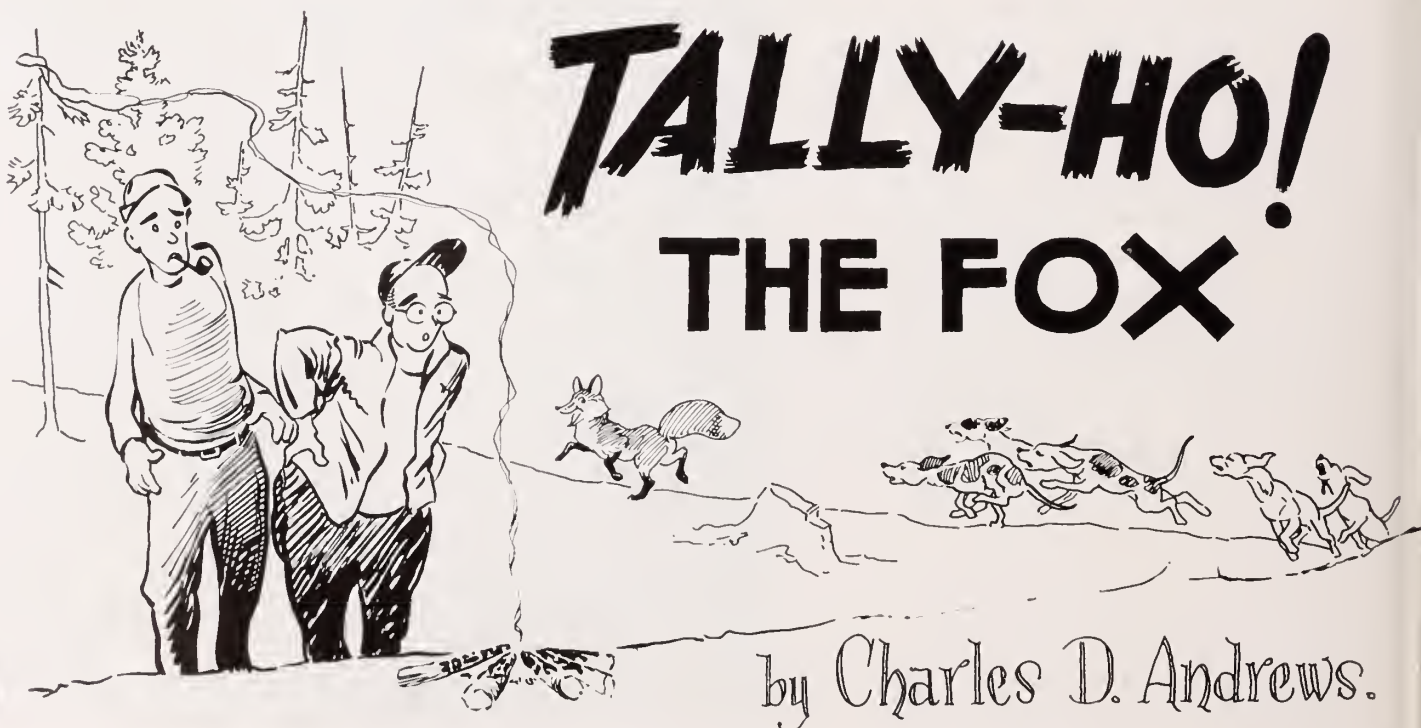
Now I don't mean any harm to that old fox, but this was the tenth night in a row that we had been running him, and it got a little aggravating after a while, when we didn't even get a quick glimpse of that wild canine. Anyhow, my hunting companion (whom I will call Bill Martin) and I sat there that night in great expectation, for we had 14 Walkers and 4 Triggs on that fox's trail, and if they didn't produce, we had about decided to call it quits.

As we waited, Bill and I talked about breeds of hounds, pipe tobacco, and finally got around to how we happened to be there that night. We discussed the sport of fox hunting, and how so many people were prejudiced against foxes. As we lighted our pipes and sat back to listen again, I got to thinking about how long it had been since I listened to my first pack of hounds sounding their voices in unbroken harmony on the trail of the wily red tail.

I guess it really started back in 1920, when a fox hunter came to the Game Department to protest the kennel license law on fox hounds, and the proposal which was to come before the Virginia Legislature which would have sounded the death knell to fox hunting in Virginia.

This single opposition was soon magnified into a small group of Virginia fox hunters who felt that the only way to keep this great sport alive permanently was to band together into a strong association. Accordingly, a meeting was called at the Hotel Rueger in Richmond in 1920. The purpose of the meeting was to form a fox hunters' association. Only a few men were present at that meeting, but the association was destined to grow as more and more lovers of the chase became aware of its organization and purpose.

At this meeting of sportsmen the Virginia Fox Hunters Association was officially organized. Among those present at this first meeting were such men as Dr. Frasia Jones, M. D. Hart, Charles



TALLY-HO! THE FOX

by Charles D. Andrews.

Drewry, S. P. Goodloe, R. T. Corbell, Thomas Scott Winston, H. Richie Taylor, Dr. A. J. Hurt, and several more true sportsmen. I was so much younger than the others that I had little to say at this first meeting, but I remember how impressed I was with their sincerity of purpose. Even though there were but a few men present at this meeting, a few names have slipped my memory, since the memory of a man is often dimmed by the passing of the years.

To this small assembly have been added many of Virginia's notables, making up a truly representative state association. From that day forward the Virginia Fox Hunters Association has done much to promote the sport of fox hunting in Virginia. Annual bench shows and field trials are offered to the members, to create a competitive spirit and a true sportsman's attitude in the mind of every member. Likewise, we attempt to create an open minded public toward our sport, and the animal that makes our organization possible—the fox.

That night as I sat there on the ridge thinking about how I first became associated with the organization, and about the fine bunch of men who love the chase like a German loves his beer, I couldn't help but think that the only way to convince a man that there was good in every fox was to take him on a real chase. Surely after experiencing the thrill of one hunt, even the most ardent hater of foxes would have to admit that it has its place on the list of protected game animals.

Sitting there with my mind miles away from that spot, I awakened with a start as Bill nudged me and told me to listen. Sure enough, there in the distance was that unmistakable music, fit for the gods, the bellow of 14 Walkers and 4 Triggs, crazy for the taste of blood as they finally began to drive their quarry in our direction. At last, after 10 consecutive days of chasing that red devil, it looked as if we would get a good look at him!

There were no squeaky mouths in that pack of hounds—at least not yet there weren't. Probably before they either treed, holed up, or drove that fox to the ground there undoubtedly would be more than one squeaky mouth who couldn't quite keep up the pace. In among that pack we could not differentiate one dog from another at first, but as the chase continued and the fox came closer and closer to where we waited, we could almost pick out each dog by his peculiar squall. There were coarse chopped, coarse, and medium coarse squalls, heart-warming screaming, and thrilling squealing notes, all blending into music that would send chills up the spine of any man who had an ounce of sporting blood in his body.

Just about the time our eyes were straining the hardest to see if we could pick that fox out of the shadows, something happened that shouldn't happen to a dog. Now I won't say that my hounds haven't taken off after another fox just when they had one about to the point of submission, but as a general rule they stuck pretty close to their original objective. Anyhow, just when we thought that we were going to have that fox driven right into our laps, what happens? Not over twenty-five yards from the spot where we waited we saw this big red take off in the direction from which the hounds were coming!

Now, as anybody with good sense knows, that wouldn't ordinarily be a very smart thing for a fox who valued his pelt to do, but that's exactly what it did. He headed down the north side of the ridge as if he intended to make combat with those dogs. Just as we suspected and were afraid of, in about 5 minutes after that dumb red tail started toward the dogs, we heard one of the doggondest commotions that you ever heard.

The dogs had seen that arrogant fox and almost ran over it before they realized what had happened. Now as you might suspect, even the most highly bred and highly trained dog sometimes cannot resist such a luscious temptation as had been placed before them. Every hound we had apparently

(Continued on page 12)





U. S. Forest Service Photo

It is a generally accepted fact that the ruffed grouse is a cyclic species.

What About the Grouse?

By R. H. CROSS, JR.

The popularity of hunting the ruffed grouse continues to rise throughout the state of Virginia. This is especially true in the part of Virginia's mountain country where the bobwhite quail populations are beginning to decrease.

THIS and other conservation magazines have printed and will continue to print numerous articles outlining specific methods for perpetuating and increasing our principal game species throughout the country. The planting of *Lespedeza bicolor* borders has become an accepted quail management practice, since it has been definitely proven that the judicious use of this plant will increase the bobwhite population on most areas. Recently, we have learned that ladino clover furnishes valuable food for deer, turkeys and cottontails; and the game technician will not hesitate to make recommendations for the improvement of a mediocre duck marsh. Yet, while this apparent progress is being made in the management of our wildlife, comparatively little is known about at least one species, the ruffed grouse.

In recent years it appears that more and more of our western Virginia sportsmen are turning to grouse hunting. Probably the greatest reason for this trend is due to the fact that a gradually changing land-use pattern has seriously threatened the typical bobwhite habitat, thus reducing the num-

bers of this game bird throughout the general area. The results of research in the field of agriculture indicate that the intensive method of farming is to be preferred over the extensive land-use practices of the past. This simply means that the farmer is becoming a specialist, producing only one or two chief crops, the selection of which depends upon soil types, terrain, climate, markets and possibly several other factors.

In western Virginia, and particularly the southwest section, the trend has been toward increased beef cattle production. Also, the establishment of several condensaries has made it profitable for even the small landowner to produce raw milk as a cash crop. Thus, more and more land is being used for grazing and a proportionate amount of bobwhite habitat is being dissolved. Since these changes have a scientifically sound basis, we can assume that the trend will be permanent.

Due to the aforementioned facts it behooves us to search for definite management practices which might be applied to existing as well as potential grouse habitat. Bird populations must be increased

in order to absorb mounting gun pressure, and herein lies the game technician's problems.

It is a generally accepted fact that the grouse is a cyclic species. While there are several theories, it is felt that the periodic fluctuations in populations have never been satisfactorily explained. In Virginia, which is considered as being on the southern fringe of the grouse range, these changes in numbers are more erratic than periodic. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to predict population changes and therefore to intelligently evaluate various management practices.

In addition to its cyclic nature, the adult ruffed grouse possesses the ability to subsist on an extremely varied diet which is usually produced naturally in Virginia's mountainous areas. Winter food shortages rarely occur, and therefore the idea of materially affecting general populations through planting might be eliminated.

The Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries long ago realized the importance of the ruffed grouse as an upland game bird. However, in order to plan a sound management program, it was first necessary to answer important questions regarding the life history and requirements of the species. The results of a 20-year grouse research project performed in New York state were carefully studied. Due to obvious geological and climatic differences between the two states it was felt that the management recommendations should be substantiated before applying them in western Virginia. Thus, similar investigational work was

carried out on the Jefferson National Forest and the findings compared. Following this work a management plan was prepared and is now in effect on our two national forests, which contain approximately 1,500,000 acres of potential grouse habitat.

Present management practices are incorporated in the Cooperative Wildlife Management Agreement between the Virginia Game Commission and U. S. Forest Service, and based upon the requirements of the species as determined by the aforementioned investigational work.

It might be stated that "grouse needs" have been broken down into four major headings and vary according to the seasons. For example: birds require areas of second growth or mature hardwoods for spring breeding and nesting; clearings or cut-over areas with grass and herbaceous growth for summer feeding; overgrown openings for fall feeding and conifers or hardwood-conifer mixtures for winter shelter. Investigation has indicated that about 80 per cent of the female grouse nest in open hardwood stands within 200 feet of an opening such as a road, trail or clearing. This particular nest location is chosen with a purpose, since the young birds are almost wholly dependent upon insectivorous food during the first two or three weeks after hatching. These openings with a ground cover of grass and herbaceous plants are havens for various insects which in turn provide food for the young grouse. Later in the summer wild strawberries, dew berries, blackberries, etc. in

A tense moment. A cautious hunter close to his setter, dead fast on point before a concealed grouse. Grouse shooting continues to be popular with many Virginians, who prefer this vigorous, mountain-type of hunting.



Commission photo by Shomon

the openings supply additional nourishment for the young and old alike. Early fall finds the grouse in the same habitat type utilizing the food producing shrubs and wild grapes. Winter foods include the buds of practically all forest species and the leaves of several broadleaf evergreens. It is during this period that the conifers or hardwood-conifer mixtures furnish needed cover.

In supplying these seasonal requirements we must consider several important grouse characteristics. The average annual range of the species is generally limited to an area whose radius seldom exceeds one quarter mile, and an adequate habitat must provide all of the necessities within this area. While all of the habitat types occur in our forests, it is the proper interspersing of these types that comprises the chief factor limiting grouse populations. There are vast sections of our national forests which contain one or more of the components necessary to provide good grouse range. However, unless an area contains all of these parts it cannot be considered a complete habitat. Theoretically, the optimum grouse range would appear on a map as a checker-board pattern. Timber types and openings furnishing the four seasonal requirements would be represented by small squares arranged in such a manner as to produce a maximum number of individual coverts of correct proportions in a given area.

The present management program is designed to evaluate our public lands and then, through the coordination of timber and wildlife management, supply the essentials necessary to maintain and increase the grouse as well as other forest and big game populations. The marking of certain areas for clear cutting not only furnishes food-producing openings for game, but this practice is often necessary to encourage the natural reproduction of certain forest species. Also, the planting of conifers provides winter shelter for wildlife and the same coniferous cover becomes valuable timber when it reaches maturity. Destructive erosion is constantly being prevented through the planting of food and cover producing species on bare areas. Thus, the management of wildlife becomes another part of the "multiple-use" program, a term commonly used by the forester to describe forest management activities.

We are firmly convinced that wildlife is a by-product of sound land management. Therefore, we can predict for the sportsman better hunting and fishing on our public lands in the future.

TALLY HO! THE FOX!

(Continued from page 9)

turned his attention toward that smart Alec fox and completely forgot about the one they had been running! Soon those bellows that once were loud bass horns in our ears were nothing but little tin whistles, as those hounds drove farther and farther away from where we stood waiting their return. No longer were there any squealers in that pack. All of them seemed to gain new strength when they sighted that presumptuous fox coming right at them, and every one gave out with the loudest, coarsest squall you ever heard.

Bill and I just looked at each other, dumbfounded, and prepared to go back to the house and get some sleep. We knew that fox had a lot of running in him, and we could come back the next day in plenty of time to see the climax of the chase. We picked up our rig and started to leave.

Just then we noticed something sitting like a statue not 25 yards away. Yep, you guessed it. It was that doggone fox the hounds had been running most of the night! It was sitting in the exact same place that the fox we had seen before had been sitting! We wondered if those two foxes could have arranged things before the chase started? When I looked at that fox sitting there, I could have almost sworn that he was laughing, and you can bet your life I know whom he was laughing at!

MRS. EMISON DIES SUDDENLY

The second time in less than a year pallor settled over the Richmond office of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries with the passing of Mrs. Beatrice Taylor Emison, secretary for the past two years to the chief of the education division. The bright-eyed, always smiling, trim little lady in the front office on the first floor died suddenly of a heart attack on Saturday, September 15, while outing with members of her Pilot Club at Dunnsville, Virginia.

Mrs. Emison first came to work for the Commission back in the twenties when she was employed as secretary to the late M. D. Hart, who died last year on September 27. She married and left the Commission, raised a family, became a widow of Harold S. Emison in 1945, and returned to work once more for the Commission in 1949. In her capacity as key secretary in the education division, she contributed much to the success of the magazine *Virginia Wildlife*; perpetually typing copy, helping with paste-up, proof reading, and other essential chores.

Always active in civic and community life, Mrs. Emison was a former president of the women's auxiliary of the Church of the Epiphany. She was especially active in the Richmond Pilot Club and in the Bryan Park Civic Association.

Though "Bea" Emison has left her desk in Room 102, she will not be forgotten. Her radiant personality, ready smile and genuine warmth, her great capacity for full living and human friendship cannot help but remain an indelible imprint on her many friends and co-workers. J. J. S.

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

CONSERVATION WEEK IS SET BY GOVERNOR

Governor Battle last month invited Virginians to observe Natural Resource Conservation Week October 21-28. This year's observance has been broadened to take in all phases of conservation — soil, water, wildlife and forests — the Governor pointed out. He asked the cooperation of all civic, business, agricultural and other groups in "bringing to the attention of all citizens of the state that their welfare and continued prosperity are dependent upon the maintenance and wise use of Virginia's land, water, forest and wildlife resources."

"It is the policy of this Commonwealth," the Governor said, "to provide for the conservation and improvement of its basic resources by the development of complete soil and water conservation systems of farming, to conserve and improve our farm and forest lands, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, and provide for more wildlife."

DESTRUCTIVE DOVE EPIZOOTIC FOUND IN VIRGINIA

According to I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission, the epizootic which has been highly destructive to doves, especially in Alabama, has now been recognized in Virginia. A specimen of a diseased dove, from Arlington County, was sent to the Patuxent Wildlife Research laboratory at Laurel, Maryland, where the disease was positively identified. This epizootic in the mourning dove apparently produces an enlargement of the glands of the throat, and the bird succumbs due to its inability to obtain food.

FLOOD OF APPLICATIONS FOR BIG LEVELS HUNT

Hunters are eager to get their names in the hat for hunting on the Big Levels Wildlife Management Unit near Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, in the George Washington National Forest. Announcement of a controlled hunt in this 30,000-acre federal game refuge was made last month. Deer or bear may be taken. The plan provides for a total of 625 hunters. Forest supervisor E. M. Karger states that about 500 requests for applications have been received already, and that applications will be accepted through October 10. "This has been a gratifying response," states Mr. Karger. "The flood of applications was accompanied by statements of approval of our plan. These expressions of understanding and cooperation foretell a high degree of success for the experimental hunt." Applications for group hunting predominate. This allows submission of a single application for a group not exceeding three hunters. Some applications have been returned because more than three names were listed. A name can appear on only one application, and duplications will have to be deleted. Big Levels hunting permits are not transferable. A permit can be used only by the hunter to whom issued.

For complete information about this hunt, sportsmen should write the forest supervisor, E. M. Karger, U. S. Forest Service, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

DEER BEING KILLED ILLEGALLY — OUTLOOK FOR GROUSE GOOD

M. Wheeler Kesterson, chief of the Commission's law enforcement division, reports that his game wardens throughout the mountainous areas of the state are facing a wave of illegal killing of deer. According to Mr. Kesterson, "with the additional wardens and conservation officers now available, we are certain that we will be able to eliminate much of this illegal hunting."

Mr. Kesterson also states that wardens in southwest Virginia report that if nothing unforeseen happens to the young grouse and quail in that section, there will be a bumper crop this hunting season.

WARM WATER FISH DISTRIBUTION BEGINS OCTOBER 1

According to G. W. Buller, chief of the fish division of the Commission, the distribution of the hatchery-reared, warm water fish species will begin on or about October 1. The fish will be distributed throughout the warmer-water streams of the state. Included among the species to be distributed will be largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, bluegill sunfish, longear sunfish and rock bass. Mr. Buller states that the hatcheries have had splendid success in their rearing ponds this year, and that a great quantity of each species will be released.



1. Captain Ed Doughty, (left center) Commission game warden, welcomes aboard James Eike, president of the V.S.O., Dr. John Grey, trip chairman, and other V.S.O. members.



2. Interviews, conversation, and bird calls were all brought back to the Commission's recording library on tape.



5. Laughing gulls, terns and curlews were found in great numbers.

COMMISSION TAKES

The Commission of Game and Inland Fish on a bird outing August 11. The trip covers Eastern Shore. The purpose of the trip was areas.

Depicted here are some of the highlights of Leon Kesteloo, chief of the Commissions



7. Leonard Elkins, C. W. Hacker, George C. Mason and R. J. Wiche are about to set their binoculars on a bird alighting offshore.



8. Miss Mary Ida Tompkins keeps her eye on the bird while Miss Charlotte Moore attempts to find its identity in her bird book.



3. A last look at the local birds before shoving off to Wreck and Cobb Islands for the day, to make a study of the shore birds in the area.



4. The Commission's boat, *Colonel*, is used to carry the troupe of V.S.O. and Commission personnel across the salty Atlantic inlets to the nearby islands.

V.S.O. ON BIRD TRIP

Members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (V.S.O.) took the Virginia Society of Ornithology trip to both Wreck and Cobb Islands on Virginia's coast to make a study of the shore birds using these

methods of the trip as they were caught by the camera and audio-visual section.



6. Coming ashore at Wreck Island to start the search for birds.



9. "What is it?" That's what these V.S.O. members want to know as they strain their eyes in an attempt to identify a bird in flight.



10. While awaiting the return of the boat, V.S.O. members take a final look around Cobb Island. Eighty bird species were identified.

In ORGANIZATION There Is STRENGTH

By C. I. VAN CLEVE

Here is a friendly message to all organized Virginia sportsmen, or those contemplating organization, as to what they can do to hold their groups together. The Lynchburg chapter of the Virginia division of the Izaak Walton League has enjoyed outstanding success in recent years, largely because the club has followed many of the suggestions outlined by Mr. Van Cleve in this article.
—Ed.

MANY SPORTSMEN'S groups and clubs are organized on a sound basis, but experience has shown that many disintegrate shortly after their formation. Why? Simply because of poor leadership, lack of interest, or disunity. It is well known that the chain is only as strong as its weakest link—thus, no matter how strong you are in your organization, it will be the ability to strengthen the weaker points that will mean success or failure to any organization.

You have just been elected president of your club. An honor has been conferred upon you. You are grateful that your friends have so honored you, your family is proud of your success, and the local papers publish your picture. In your own esteem and in the esteem of your friends you are "sitting on top of the world."

Now, what has actually happened that perhaps you didn't realize in the excitement of the election? You have been chosen for a position that will require as much and in all probability more executive ability than does your present position. You have accepted another full time job, and the time that you give to it will have to come out of your leisure time, which in turn will mean the sacrifice of many of your pleasures.

In such personal sacrifice lies the success or failure of many organizations. Think, think well, before accepting the presidency or any other office in your club, and accept it only if you will give it the time and thought to make a success of it.

Qualified officers are a prerequisite to the many factors that it takes to operate a successful club. Therefore, this must be an accomplished fact before

any other factors can be brought into play. The following comments are based upon my attempt to analyze the success of the Lynchburg Chapter of the Izaak Walton League for the purpose of being of some possible help to other sport and conservation clubs.

For many years the Lynchburg Chapter had a small but steady membership, holding their meetings four or five times a year, preferably where they could hold them without charge for the hall. Suddenly, almost over-night, the picture began to

"Our first attempt to acquaint everyone with our organization was a fishing contest."

Commission photo by Kesteloo



change. It was decided that meetings should be held once a month, and also that the programs would have to be more interesting. A program committee was formed, and the program schedule was worked out months ahead.

Also, it was the consensus of opinion that any organization which had to depend on the goodwill of other civic organizations for a place of meeting couldn't have much pride; we therefore rented a permanent meeting place, with the view of holding our meetings on the same day of each month. Attendance began to grow immediately.

Our organization had always had fine ideals and purposes, but only a few ever knew just what these ideals and purposes were. The chapter embarked upon a publicity campaign to acquaint every man, woman, and child in the city with the Izaak Walton League.

Our first attempt along this line was the organization of a fishing contest, in which the local merchants were co-sponsors and donated prizes. This contest was open to the public, and local newspapers gave us complete cooperation.

Our second publicity attempt was the promotion of a sportsman's show, held early in the spring in a downtown building. The purpose of the show was to give our local sportsmen an opportunity to display their trophies; to give our sporting goods dealers a chance to display their merchandise (no selling was permitted on the floor); and for the League to acquaint the public with its purposes.

Again, local papers and radio stations were wonderful with their cooperation, giving us almost unlimited publicity.

Our membership continued to grow, and as it did we aimed toward a permanent goal: the acquisition of land on which we could construct a lake and a club house. The ball was now rolling and gathering momentum, for the organization had pride! We were standing on our own two legs, and beholden to no one! We were giving our members something for their money—twelve good meetings a year with excellent programs, and also coffee and doughnuts after the meetings!

The League had gained prestige in our city, for we had two civic enterprises that the whole town was interested in: our annual fishing contest and the sportsman's show. The citizens of our locality had become educated as to our purpose, that of conservation of woods, waters and wildlife. When we incorporated under the state law we published our League's ideals and bylaws in book form, distributed them to the entire membership,



S. O. Fisher Studio Photo

"Our second publicity attempt was a sportsman's show, which included a trophy contest."

and also made sure that each incoming member knew of his club's ideals, and was given a book, upon his acceptance to the League.

The accomplishments of the Lynchburg chapter have been too numerous to describe in detail in this article, but the ones referred to are basic. From them we can draw our conclusions, with the expressed desire and hope that other organizations may profit from our experience.

In the final analysis, we have been successful because we became independent; we became civic-minded and included the public in our enterprises; we gave our membership more for their money than just a membership card; and we educated our own members and the public as to the aims, ideals, and purposes of the Izaak Walton League.

Pride, generosity, value and education are the ingredients of our success. Today the Lynchburg chapter has 700 members and is still expanding. It owns 171 acres of land on which it has constructed a six-acre lake with beach and boat docks, and a skeet field. The Virginia State Police are now constructing a pistol and rifle range on land provided by the League. All this has transpired in four short years, with the membership costing only \$5.00 per year.

The Lynchburg chapter of the IWLA extends to each and every one a hearty invitation to visit us, see how we work and work with us.



Photo from National Audubon Society

The last Labrador duck was shot off the New Jersey coast in 1875.

ALMOST all of us are saddened when we think that a species of bird has become extinct, that it has disappeared from the face of the earth. We will do everything in our power to preserve the members of a dying race. That is why, no doubt, news of a survivor is greeted with such enthusiasm. Yet it is in a large part man's own carelessness that has permitted so many of our birds to be wiped out, and unless we are more careful others will go also.

The passenger pigeon has been erased from our lists for a generation, but there are many bird lovers who still hope that a few may be found in some inaccessible place. Every now and then someone reports seeing this bird. So far, none of these reports have been authenticated. In 1888, it was said of the passenger pigeon that "Wandering continually in search of food throughout all parts of North America, it is wonderfully abundant at times in certain districts."

In 1897 Coues said of it: "Though we do not now have the millions that earlier writers speak of, and no contract for service has for many years included a clause that 'the hireling should not be fed, too often, on wild pigeons and salmon,' there are still great roosts and flights in the upper Mississippi Valley and many of these birds may still breed in Canada, northward to Hudson Bay."

The lovely creature was well on its way out then, but no action had been taken to restrict the professional fowlers who netted them in such quantities that the carcasses were shipped by car loads to the cities. Their habit of breeding in dense rookeries added to the disaster awaiting these pigeons, for farmers would cut down trees filled with nests and turn their pigs in to feed on the eggs and squabs.

OUR DISAPPEARING BIRDS

BY MYRTLE J. BROLEY

In 1808 Alexander Wilson wrote of a flock he saw containing over two billion birds; yet in 1914 the last known passenger pigeon died in captivity. Rewards have been offered for authentic news of a nesting pair, or a single bird, but so far none of these have been claimed.

With the finding in New Zealand of a takahe, a bird which had been thought exterminated fifty years ago, hope revived that somewhere someone might find one or two surviving passenger pigeons, or that other vanished birds might be glimpsed again.

The whooping crane, now down to thirty-three in number, may make a comeback.

Photo Allan D. Cruickshank from National Audubon Society



The takahe, a plump bird about eighteen inches in height, was flightless. Apparently it had no enemies from which it needed to fly until the Maori settled in New Zealand. They found the flesh pleasing and killed so many of these birds that when white settlers arrived the birds were very scarce. Indeed, only four specimens were known to have been taken for museums, the last one in 1898.

First recent traces of it were some large footprints found in the wild mountainous country on South Island last fall. An expedition was organized, and two takahas were sighted and captured with a net. After being measured, examined, and photographed these survivors from the past were released—not killed to be put on exhibition, as would have happened some years ago. Birdmen are wondering, if such large creatures as these could conceal themselves successfully for fifty years in such a small area, what other species believed extinct might be hidden in different parts of the world.

Another New Zealand bird, the moa, a flightless giant, disappeared about five hundred years ago. Standing about ten feet high, it was at least two feet taller than the largest living ostrich. Its legs were very large and strong, but apparently did not offset its inability to fly. Larger even than the moas were the elephant birds of Madagascar. Un-

The passenger pigeon has been erased from our lists for a generation.

Photo from National Audubon Society



Photo from National Audubon Society

The great Auk was brutally slaughtered for its oil and feathers.

doubtedly it was the eggs of this species, some of which have been found in the sand near the sea-shore there, that inspired the story of the fabulous adventures of Sinbad the Sailor in the *Arabian Nights Tales*. They are thirteen inches in length, nine inches wide, and have a liquid capacity of two gallons. What an omelet one could make with a single egg! These birds died out within the last five centuries.

Almost all of the continents had one or more of these large flightless ostrich-like birds, and North America was no exception. The remains of one were found in Wyoming; judging by the bones it stood seven feet high. The strong head and stout neck were as large as those of a horse. Similar bones have been found in other sections, also.

Maybe it is just as well that such birds as these have gone, and that the dodo should remain only a word for something completely extinct (since the only remaining skin of it in the British Museum had to be burned because of moths), but we have lost and are losing birds that are needed here.

The great auk, the last one of which was found dead in Newfoundland in 1853, was brutally slaughtered by whalers for its oil and a few of the feathers. Harold Peters, of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, told me he had seen huge piles of auk bones in central Newfoundland. He said the eggs had been wantonly destroyed also.

The last Labrador duck, a strikingly marked black and white species, was shot off the New Jersey coast in 1875. Though once abundant, there are now only forty-four specimens to be found in the museums of the world. Sought out for its eggs, feathers and flesh, it could not survive the age of rifles, and its passing should be a warning to all of us to prevent a similar disaster from happening to any of our other waterfowl. Our

(Continued on page 22)



Virginia's Inland Fish Series

THE SMALLMOUTH BASS

A POWERFUL swimmer, a leaping acrobat, and true dynamite of the deep is the smallmouth black bass. Sometimes he will leap out of the water, sometimes he will tug at your line and maybe just lie there and let you pull him close to the boat, but just when you think you have him—Brother, LOOK OUT!

Confined originally to the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi basins, the smallmouth has been introduced to Cuba, Europe, and South Africa, and its adaptability to all sorts of conditions detrimental to trout promise to make it even more of a game fish in the future.

This fighting sportsman comes in packages of from 2 to 4 pounds in Virginia, and is every ounce a fighter. It consumes almost any type of animal if it will fit in its mouth, from worms to rats and from frogs to insects.

No small factor in the numerical superiority of the smallmouth is its reproductive capacity. A male will fertilize eggs of several females during a spawning season. Females have been found to carry 17,000 eggs, and while not all are deposited at one time, the greater portion are. Nests with 10,000 eggs are not unusual. Their breeding habits are no doubt the most elaborate of any game fish.

The male is the most important element in the homemaking. When the temperature of the water

rises above 60 degrees, about March or April in Virginia, he selects a protected spot among the reeds, and roots out a depression about 18 inches across. This is lined with stones around the edge, and there he stays until some willing female arrives. She succumbs readily after a short courtship of advancing and retreating with raised fins, and finally she circles about the nest and deposits her eggs. After fertilizing them, the male throws her out and waits for his next mate.

The male keeps the nest free from fungus and aerates the eggs at the same time by the fanning of his tail. The half-inch fry hatch in two or three weeks. Then father deserts the young, leaving them to the fate life has chosen for them.

The Commission's modern hatchery at Front Royal is devoted primarily to the hatching and rearing of smallmouth bass and other species which thrive in waters which are cold, but not cold enough for trout.

The smallmouth is a peculiarly American fish. Not only is it native to this country, but it embodies the fighting qualities of our pioneers. Through silting and pollution of our once fruitful waters, we have destroyed much of this great American's home. Shall we heed the warning before it is too late, or shall another great American pass us by?

Virginia's Game Bird Series

THE MOURNING DOVE

HOW fortunate we are to have within our boundaries a bird with such esthetic and sporting appeal as the mourning dove. The whistling sound emitted by the rapid beat of wings in swift flight calls for the greatest skill of the marksman, and the soothing, plaintive quality of its call makes it popular with both the sportsman and the student of nature.

The mourning dove breeds in every one of the 48 states. It ranges from Canada to Cuba and central Mexico. Due to its migration instinct it falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government and is protected under the terms of the migratory bird treaties.

The dove can best be described by comparing it with a domestic pigeon, only its tail and wings are a little more pointed and its body is a little smaller.

This bird differs from all other game birds in that it raises more than one brood a year. Its broods number from two in the north to five and six in the deep south. In the southeast, nesting may occur in almost every month.

When building its nest the dove usually favors an isolated tree along the edge of a pasture, field, or clearing, about 30 feet from the ground. Occasionally it may build its loosely constructed nest of pine needles, grass or twigs on the ground or on a



stump. Two eggs are laid on two successive days, and are hatched after 14 days of incubation.

The young leave the nest after 11 or 12 days, but when first hatched they are weak and inactive. They grow rapidly, however, gaining their nourishment from a glandular secretion produced in the crops of both parent birds, which is known as "pigeon milk." This milk is regurgitated from parent to the young. The amount taken after the first day decreases rapidly, and is gradually replaced in the nestlings' diet by various seeds.

When the fledglings leave the nest there is little difference in their diet and that of the parent bird. To the young and the adult alike, seeds are the main food—mostly of grasses, legumes and corn.

With the exception of quail, the mourning dove is probably the most important game bird in the southeast. Approximately seven percent of all the shotgun shells expended in the United States annually are said to be used on this fast-flying bird.

An abundant food supply the year around is essential to sound dove management. The harvesting of such crops as soybeans, corn, peanuts and cowpeas by the use of livestock usually leaves sufficient waste grain in the field to attract large numbers. Where its needs are provided for most abundantly, it will also be found most abundant.

OUR DISAPPEARING BIRDS

(Continued from page 19)

ducks are still menaced, but steps have been taken to guard them.

When a species has decreased in number there is little chance of building it up again. True, by full time protection those lovely reddish waders, Hudsonian godwits, have staged a comeback in the western provinces of Canada, and the carefully guarded flock of trumpeter swans is growing slowly. The heath hen vanished in our own time, and the whooping crane is going unless we can do more than we have been able to do so far. It is true that there were three young when the flock returned to Texas last fall, but at this writing no nests have been located in the widespread search carried on during the last three years in north-western Canada.

We believe we saw the last one of these birds to migrate through Manitoba. One lovely September day in 1925, we drove to Shoal Lake, north of Winnipeg, to watch for sandhill cranes. We saw many flocks of ducks and geese, but no sandhills. We were just getting ready to leave when, far in the distance, we heard the deep, Eocene croo-oo! Soon a "V" of twenty-five came into view. Leading them, great wings flapping effortlessly, was a huge, white bird, a whopping crane! His musical whoop as he caught sight of us sent all of them much higher, although they passed directly over us. We stood tensely, binoculars trained on this bird we'd hardly dared to hope to see.

Away they went, across the lake and over to a grain field, where they planed down to feed. We marveled at the length of the long black legs the whooper spread wide apart for landing. We noticed how his great, black-tipped wings helped as brakes. For over an hour we studied him as he fed, keeping a little apart from the lowlier sandhills.

It is sad news for all bird lovers that the experiment tried out in the Aransas Refuge in Texas has failed. Two whooping cranes that had been in captivity thirteen and eight years, respectively, one in Nebraska and the other in New Orleans, were put together over a year ago in a 150-acre

open-topped enclosure. There was one chance in a million that they would build a nest and have eggs, and they did! However, after twenty-four days of incubation, the cranes were seen to break up the eggs themselves. Examination proved that they were infertile, so that may have been the reason. It is true that many wild eggs are infertile. One scientist gives the percentage as about one-third, so it is hoped that the cranes will be left together and that they may have better luck next year. If so, chances of perpetuation of this grand species, now down to thirty-three birds, will be much better.

The fight against the use of feathers on ladies' hats saved the lovely white egrets, as well as our humming birds and others with gorgeous plumage. Now the legislative body of the United States has again cut the time limit for the feather trade to get rid of supplies, listed as on hand for sale in 1941, to April 15, 1951.

More and more, people are realizing what an asset we have in our birds, and there is less and less of that feeling that owning a gun gives one the right to shoot birds. Once the public is aroused, our birds receive greater protection, and we may save all the rest of our species; and who knows, a pair of passenger pigeons may yet turn up some place!



"Watch out, Peters! It may be loaded again!"

As this issue goes to press we have had brought to our attention a sad piece of news to the effect that another nesting tragedy for "Crip" and "Jo," the only mated pair of whooping cranes in cap-

tivity, has taken place. As a result of a flood, their single egg was broken before it had a chance to hatch.

The birds are at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. This tends to show, says the National Audubon Society, that the crane's best chances for survival depend on its breeding successes in the far north. Most cranes winter in Texas, but just where they nest is not known.

White bass are so prolific that they spawn as many as 50,000 eggs. In comparison, black bass and many other species of game fish spawn as few as 20,000 eggs.



Izaak Walton Body Pushes National Park Project

A national park project which has been termed of great value to northern Virginians is being given the whole-hearted support of the Alexandria chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America.

According to Valrie McDaniel, public relations chairman of the Alexandria chapter, IWLA, "... the people of northern Virginia and the Washington metropolitan area have long been in need of a bathing beach, a good fishing lake for women and children, and other outdoor activities nearby, where families can go without having to spend most of the day going and coming.

"There is available to this area a U. S. national park of approximately 23 square miles. It is the Prince William Forest Park, located on U. S. highway No. 1 at Dumfries, Virginia, within 35 minutes of Washington. A very small part of it is now used by several civic and religious groups for summer camping.

"This park has possibilities for a large picnic area, camp sites and family week-end cottages. It has been determined that a fresh water lake of some 250 acres can be had, which would accommodate a large bathing beach and fresh water fishing."

Mr. McDaniel explained that the IWLA chapter's officers have been gathering data on the project for some time, and that Ira Lykes, manager of the Prince William Forest Park, at a recent meeting of the chapter described the recreational potentialities of the park.

"This park needs development so that full recreational facilities can be made available to the public," Mr. McDaniel stated. "The National Park Service should be asked to divert some effort in completing the park as soon as possible. There is no metropolitan area so badly in need of such facilities."

Mr. McDaniel indicated that the Waltonians are considering this as a major civic project, and are preparing to throw the full weight of their organization, bolstered by additional public support, behind efforts to secure full development of the park.

Back Bay Creel Census Summarized

G. W. Buller, chief of the Commission's fish division, and assistant chief Dean Rosebery, have com-

pleted a summary of the creel census data taken on Back Bay Wildlife Refuge during the month of June.

There were 534 boats used on Back Bay during June, and 1,218 fishermen using these boats. They fished a total of 9,562 hours and caught 5,636 fish, or about one fish for each two hours of fishing, which is not a bad average considering the length of time covered by the census.

Included in these harvest figures were 3,630 bass, 1,869 white perch, 45 yellow perch, and 45 catfish.

Woman's Club Does Wildlife Work

The Doswell Woman's Club, through the efforts of their conservation chairman, Mrs. N. S. Jacobs, is one of the first women's clubs to take an active part in the new junior wildlife club work. They are forming the second such group in the state, the first club having been organized by Mrs. H. E. Adams, of Covington, for her students.

Commission to Terminate Camp Peary Permit

According to I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, the commandant of the Fifth Naval District at Norfolk, Virginia, has notified the Commission that the Camp Peary Reservation will be re-activated October 1, 1951. It will be necessary for the Commission and the Department of Conservation and Development to terminate their revocable permit, and to withdraw from the reservation.

Changes in Law Enforcement Personnel

M. Wheeler Kesterson, chief of the Commission's law enforcement division, reports some changes in his personnel.

Peter H. Gouldman, game warden of Westmoreland County, retired as of July 31, 1951.

Hubert R. Bunch and Charles Montgomery have been promoted from game wardens to conservation officers, effective August 1, 1951.

Mr. Bunch replaces A. G. Burns of the Piedmont District, and Mr. Montgomery replaces R. C. Yates of the Tidewater District.

Forest W. Hawks has been appointed regular game warden of Alleghany County as of August 1, and Melbourne J. Fisher has been appointed special game warden of Roanoke City as of August 2.



Commission photo by Kesteloo

The Commission's new license plate attachment is available at the Richmond office.

Commission's License Plate Attachments Are Available

The Commission now has attractive license plate attachments available. They may be obtained by writing to the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, P. O. Box 1642, Richmond 13, Virginia, and enclosing twenty-five cents.

Commission's Bird Booklet Is Here

J. J. Shomon, chief of the Commission's education division, has announced that the long-awaited bird booklet has finally arrived, and is available at 25 cents per copy. All of the back orders are now being filled as quickly as possible to avoid further delay to the purchasers.

The booklet, "Birdlife of Virginia," is intended as a student's introduction to bird study and as a layman's guide to the birds of the state. It has been over two years in preparation.

A four-color cover and 7 interior color plates are among the features of the booklet. An initial printing of 15,000 was decided upon, with 5,000 earmarked for distribution to Virginia schools and the rest offered for sale at the Commission offices. Orders for the booklet are now being taken, and should be sent to the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Education Division, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia.

Big Game Trophy Contest

The date for the state's annual big game trophy contest has been set tentatively as November 3, 1951.

The contest for east of the Blue Ridge is being sponsored by the Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's

Association, located at Newport News. The chairman of this trophy contest is George Johnson, 60 Hopkins Street, Hilton Village, Virginia.

The contest for west of the Blue Ridge is being sponsored by the Harrisonburg Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. The chairman of the trophy committee is P. T. Hanlon, c/o U. S. Forest Service, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

To be eligible for entry in the state contest, all trophies must first have been entered in a regional contest, and they must have been one of the first five winners in the regional contest. Deer and bear must be entered in their respective area contest, i.e., if the bear or deer is killed east of the Blue Ridge, it must be entered in the contest for east of the Blue Ridge.

The dates for the regional contests are set as follows: Harrisonburg, October 27, 1951; Newport News, October 27, 1951 (tentative).

Any deer or bear head legally killed in 1950-1951 is eligible for entry in the big game trophy contest.

Quinn Speaks to IAGFCC

I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries was assigned to the program of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners, which met in Rochester, New York, on September 10 and 11, 1951.

Mr. Quinn spoke on "The Policies and Objectives of Game Commissions."

Wild Turkey Flies Across York River

Bill Hogge, the Commission's game warden for York and James City counties and Williamsburg city, reports the observation of a wild turkey flying across the York River. Bill states that the bird flew from Gloucester County across the York River into York County. The measured distance at this point in the river is 3½ to 4 miles.

Mr. Hogge also reports the shooting a quail on a farm in Dare, Virginia, which he had banded and stocked at Poquoson, York County, a distance of one mile across the river from where it was shot.

OCTOBER AUTHORS

CHARLES D. ANDREWS, "Tally-ho! The Fox!" is a member of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, from Suffolk, Virginia.

J. W. COURTNEY, JR., is the president of the Virginia State Rifle and Revolver Association, Newport News, Virginia.

MR. C. I. VAN CLEVE, national director of I.W.L.A., is also president of the Lynchburg chapter, Virginia division.

MRS. CHARLES L. BROLEY is a noted bird enthusiast from Ontario, Canada.

R. H. CROSS, JR., is one of the Commission's game technicians.



BRITISH COLUMBIA RESTRICTS PLANE HUNTERS

The most comprehensive law in North America regulating the use of aircraft in hunting and fishing probably is that carried on the statute books of British Columbia, the Wildlife Management Institute reports.

A permit must be obtained from the Game Commission before anyone can use aircraft for hunting, fishing, or trapping in the Province and a provincial license to hunt, fish, or trap also is required before firearms, traps, or fishing tackle can be carried in any plane other than one used by scheduled commercial airlines. An exception is made for firearms carried solely for emergencies, provided the weapons are sealed in an approved manner. Shooting from any aircraft, either in motion or at rest, is prohibited, except that designated predators may be shot from planes under permit. Anyone who uses privately owned or rented planes on hunting, fishing, or trapping expeditions is required to submit reports before and after such flights.

TURTLE EGGS NO DELICACY

Mr. Nicholson, an ardent fisherman, was checking some of the agronomy plots on the V.P.I. farm during the month of June, when he discovered a snapping turtle. This turtle was about three or four hundred yards away from a three-foot branch known as the right-hand fork of Stubbles Creek, which flows through the V. P. I. campus. The turtle was in one of the strawberry plantings.

Mr. Nicholson noted that she was building a nest, and within a period of several hours had not only built

the nest, but also had deposited 24 eggs in it.

The snapping turtle ordinarily mates between April and October, and lays 24 to 30 white, thin, parchment-like hard-shelled eggs about five inches under the soil. The eggs hatch in 90 days. To lay her eggs, the female leaves the water to dig her nest on shore.

This armoured, shelled creature can run rampage through a school of fish, or a flock of young ducks. It is too dangerous to be considered a pet at any time.

In this particular case, Dr. Henry Mosby, unit leader of the Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Re-



Photo by H. S. Mosby

This snapper built a nest and laid her 24 white eggs within several hours.

search Unit, photographed this unusual event, and decided to do a little research of his own. The turtle stew was fine—but the eggs, ugh!

FARM PONDS GROW 'EM BIG

Last month, Mr. C. G. Pitman reported to the Commission that he had caught a 7-pound, 11-ounce

largemouth bass, to give us an example of what the farm ponds of King William County are producing.

Mr. Pitman said he made his catch from a private pond, owned by Mr. McGeorge, just off Ronte 30.

The fish measured 27-7/8 inches long, 16-15/16 inches in circumference, and its mouth measured 5 inches from upper lip to lower lip.

Mr. Pitman said that "this bass was not as big as many fish taken from the McGeorge pond—you ought to have seen the ones that got away!"

Although not a record, fish such as the one caught by Mr. Pitman seem to prove that farm ponds are here to stay. They are no longer in the research stage, but have found a place as a vital part of every farm. We have a lot to learn, but the outlook is promising.

TWO PROPOSED NORTHWEST DAMS DENIED FUNDS

The appropriations committee for the Corps of Engineers civil functions has dynamited two proposed blocks to the Northwest salmon runs by denying funds for the Ice Harbor Lock and Dam in Washington, and for the Dalles Dam in Oregon, according to the Wildlife Management Institute. In both cases, the effects of the proposed construction on salmon fisheries was given as the reason.

EVIL EYES

Pupils in the eyes of rattlesnakes, and other pit vipers which are mostly nocturnal prowlers, are round at night. During daylight hours they contract to vertical slits, thus cutting out bright sunlight.



for
Students
Teachers
Parents

Wildlife Ramblings

What a wonderful gift God gave us when He gave us the change of seasons! What greater gift has man given us? None, I think.

The month of October appeals to any outdoorsman for many reasons. First of all, you might say that it is the transition period between summer and winter. But more than this, it is the period of transition in the minds of men. No longer do our thoughts linger on cool mountain streams and fighting trout; no longer do we think of swimming, picnicking, boating, and the like. Yes, a change has taken place—but why?

Perhaps the answer lies deep within us. What happens to a man when frost is in the air—when the leaves turn brown, the nights turn cool—when the hunting season comes closer? Why do our minds turn from those unimportant things in life, such as dollars, new cars, boats and beaches, to thoughts of beagles, Winchesters, calibers, bob-whites, rabbits, and deer?

Still we haven't explained it. Actually, why should we try? If you haven't experienced that feeling which comes to every outdoor man along about October, then we can't explain it. If you have experienced it—well, we don't care what causes it. All we know is, that it happens and we like it!

BIRD OF THE MONTH The Field Sparrow

"Give a dog a bad name, and you had just as well kill him." And what a bad name they have—the sparrows!

But wait a minute! Why that bad name? Simply because of the English sparrow. And he is no sparrow at all; doesn't even belong to the great family Fringillidae (Sparrows, Finches, Buntings, etc.). But that is a different story.

The sparrows are probably the largest family of birds. Around the world there are about 1,200 species. The books tell us they are the most highly developed family. That is, they have come farthest from the old reptilian ancestors. Therefore we may call them "bird aristocrats." Some students claim that the sparrows are, of all birds, the most beneficial to man, as they eat enormous quantities of weed seeds. And listen! The sparrows are real songsters. All of them are neatly dressed; and some of them are outstandingly beautiful.



"I don't fish myself. I suppose it's to keep mosquitoes off."

But our bird of the month is the field sparrow. He is with us every day of the year. As I write, out yonder he sings all day long, and sometimes at night.

Would you like to know the field sparrow? His home is in the fields. His nest is in weeds or tufts of grass. He is "just a little sparrow," inconspicuous. But watch for three or four markings: an unspotted breast, clear gray or buff; two white bars on each wing; a head severely plain; and the best mark of all, a pink bill. When you see these markings, you will know you are looking at the often

seen, often heard and little appreciated field sparrow.

—REV. W. B. MCLWAIN.

Get Ready, Students!

The date is October 15—the event? Why, the fifth annual Wildlife Essay Contest, of course!

Start thinking about it now. Let's get in there and pitch. Who knows, you may come up with one of those 57 prizes the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Izaak Walton League are giving away for the best essays written by you guys and gals.

For the rules on how to enter, just turn to the back cover of this issue and read all about it.

Small Story

The opossum is not very well developed when born. Some idea of their size at this stage is indicated by the fact that an ordinary teaspoon will accommodate a litter of *eighteen* newborn babes with a little room to spare. Those who may doubt the authenticity of this statement may refer to a picture in the August, 1930, issue of Nature Magazine, wherein there appeared a picture showing a teaspoon containing eighteen tiny opossums.

Book Review

FORESTS AND MEN, by William B. Greeley, published by Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York. Price \$3.00.

Authoritative and fascinating factual history of the development of a new, democratic system of forestry, by a man who helped it grow.

The text spans the days from migratory lumbering to the present, and recounts the events which led to the rescue of the American forests.

To everyone whose livelihood or interest is forestry or the forest industries, this book has something interesting and informative to say.



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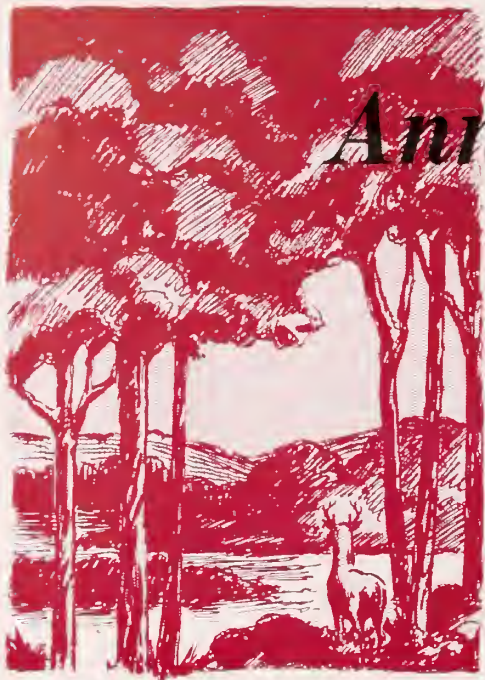
Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries
7 North Second Street, Richmond, Virginia

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing _____ as payment for _____ copies of the new booklet,
"BIRDLIFE OF VIRGINIA." Please rush them to me at the following address:

Signed _____

Address _____



Announcing the **5th** ANNUAL WILDLIFE ESSAY Contest

TEACHERS: Enter your school now! Write for free reference material!

\$1,000.00 in Prizes!



SPONSORED BY: The Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America and the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

DATE: OCTOBER 15, 1951 TO
FEBRUARY 28, 1952.

SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE: Only Virginia schools, elementary and high, grades 5-12 inclusive will be eligible to enter this contest.

SUBJECT: The Importance of Wildlife Conservation and Related Resources.

CONTEST RULES

1. Essays must be submitted through the schools participating and each essay must contain a minimum of 500 words.
2. Each entry should bear the following information in the upper right-hand corner of each essay: name, sex, age, grade, address, school, county, and teacher.
3. Students of Virginia schools, grades 5-12 inclusive, will be eligible to enter this contest.
4. ALL essays MUST be mailed first class, PREPAID to ESSAY CONTEST HEADQUARTERS, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia. Teachers must submit ALL entries, however they may make their selection of the best essays and indicate their choices.
5. No papers will be returned and the decision of the judges will be final. Each sponsoring organization will appoint two conservationists to serve on the judging committee.
6. Previous grand prize winners will not be eligible for top awards.

Eight grand prizes, \$50 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$400
Eight second prizes, \$25 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$200
Eight third prizes, \$15 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$120
Sixteen honorable mention prizes, \$10 each, two for each grade, totaling	\$160
Sixteen special mention prizes, \$5 each, two for each grade, totaling	\$80
One school prize, best response	\$40
Grand total	\$1000

There will be seven prizes in each of the eight competing grades. Grand prize winners will come to Richmond as guests of the sponsors to receive their awards. Others will be given awards in the schools. The school having the best response will be given a special \$40 prize for its athletic or general purpose fund.

200 certificates of merit will be awarded in addition to the money grand prizes.